

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.-14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended) A method of screening ~~for a drug candidate~~ compound or its salt ~~wherein said drug candidate compound or its salt inhibits~~inhibiting the expression of a gene ~~for encoding a protein comprising the same or substantially the same amino acid sequence as the amino acid sequence of represented by SEQ ID NO: 1, or an amino acid sequence having at least 80% homology to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said protein has a neurofibrillary degeneration promoting activity or a neuronal cell death promoting activity,~~
wherein said compound or its salt is a candidate for a prophylactic or therapeutic agent for neurodegenerative disease or diabetes,
~~which-wherein said method comprises:~~
comparing (i) a cell culture comprising using a polynucleotide encoding the said protein or its a partial peptide of said protein with (ii) the cell culture of (i) further comprising a test compound.

16-47. (Cancelled).

48. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein the comparison is made by measuring the expression level of the gene encoding said protein or a partial peptide of said protein of (i) and (ii).

49. (New) The method according to Claim 48, wherein said comparison is made by measuring the level of the protein or partial peptide of said protein or the level of mRNA encoding said protein or partial peptide of said protein.

50. (New) The method according to Claim 15, which further comprises a step of selecting a compound inhibiting the expression of the gene in (ii) by at least about 20% as compared to (i).